

FACULTY COUNCIL
Tuesday, September 2, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre

MINUTES

Councilors Present: M. Abou Alaiwa, B. Ayati, A. Bassuk, A. Farag, C. Hogden, E. Johnson, J. Koch, P. McGonagill, N. Mohr, M. Schroeder, D. Shane, C. Vogel, E. Walker, E. Welder, K. Whitaker, F. Williams.

Officers Present: N. Greysier, C. Just, C. Sheerin.

Councilors Excused: T. Abel.

Councilors Absent: None.

Guests: M. Gardinier (Emeritus Faculty Council), E. Gillan (Rules and Bylaws Committee), P. Matthes (Office of the President), M. Simon (Daily Iowan), B. Thomas (Office of the Provost), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

I. Call to Order – President Just called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Koch moved and Professor Farag seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Council Minutes (April 8, 2025) – Professor Bassuk moved and Professor Vogel seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Draft Faculty Senate Agenda (September 16, 2025) – President Just indicated that changes may be made to the draft agenda prior to the Senate meeting. A final version will be approved at the meeting. Professor Walker moved and Professor Welder seconded that the draft agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. Committee Appointments (Craig Just, on behalf of Committee on Committees) – Professor Ayati moved and Professor Shane seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - Hope Metcalf (Law) to fill the unexpired term of Alison Guernsey (Law) on the Faculty Senate, 2025-27
 - M. Asghar Bhatti (Civil & Environmental Engineering) to fill the unexpired term of Jennifer Fiegel (Chemical & Biochemical Engineering) on the Faculty Senate, 2025-26
 - Knute Carter (Biostatistics) to replace William Story (Community & Behavioral Health) on the Faculty Senate, Fall 2025
 - James Wo (Sociology & Criminology) to replace Frederick Solt (Political Science) on the Faculty Senate, Spring 2026

- Patricia Groves (Nursing) to the Conflict of Interest in Employment Committee, 2025-28
- Joshua Lens (Health, Sport, & Human Physiology) to the Presidential Committee on Athletics, 2025-30

III. New Business

- *Councilor and Officer Introductions*

At this first Faculty Council meeting of the academic year, Councilors introduced themselves and indicated their collegiate affiliations and length of time at the university.

- *Call for an Election to Fill the Vacant Office of Vice President (Ed Gillan, Chair, Rules and Bylaws Committee)*

President Just noted that it is rare for a Senate officer election to occur outside of the normal cycle. He indicated that, in order to confirm the correct election procedures, he had consulted with the chair of the Rules and Bylaws Committee (Professor Gillan), and with the members of the Committee on Elections. Professor Gillan reminded the group that Professor Curtu had resigned from the position of Faculty Senate president early in the summer, after a tenure of only a few months. Vice President Just had then transitioned into the role of president, thus leaving the office of vice president vacant. After reviewing the Faculty Senate constitution, Professor Gillan, President Just, and the members of the Committee on Elections determined that the appropriate option among the several provided was for the Faculty Council to call for an election for vice president at the next regularly-scheduled Senate meeting, thus ensuring viable and desirable officer continuity. Professor Gillan explained that procedures for this special election will adhere closely to those already established for regular elections, with candidate statements distributed before the meeting and voting on paper ballots occurring at the meeting. Members of the Committee on Elections will conduct the election. The winning candidate must have a majority of votes from those Senators present at the meeting. Professor Gillan observed that three candidates for vice president have emerged thus far. The Senate bylaws call for a runoff election between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the event that no candidate initially receives a majority of votes. President Just noted that one of the three candidates had been serving as chair of the Committee on Elections. Upon declaring candidacy, that person stepped down from both the chair position and the committee. An interim chair was appointed and the vacant committee seat will be filled later.

Professor Koch expressed her appreciation to President Just for his willingness to step in to the role of president without first having the benefit of experience as vice president. President Just responded that when he served as secretary last year, he learned a tremendous amount from the officer team at that time. He also acknowledged the wisdom of the Senate officer structure that allows the departing president to serve a final year as past president and thereby provide guidance to the other officers. Past President Sheerin praised President Just's efforts to fully embrace his new, unexpected role this year as president.

Professor Williams moved and Professor McGonagill seconded that the Faculty Council call an election to take place at the next regularly-scheduled Faculty Senate meeting (September 16) in order to fill the vacant office of Faculty Senate vice president. The motion carried unanimously.

President Just indicated that the Faculty Senate would be notified of this upcoming election. Candidate statements would be distributed to Senators on Friday.

- *Faculty Council/Administrative Retreat Discussion/Reactions (Councilors)*

Professor Koch praised the format of the retreat, which allowed for significant inter-personal interaction. She added that the structure of the event, which moved individuals into different groups several times, allowed opportunities for participants to continually meet new people and problem solve together. Professor Farag also appreciated this aspect of the retreat and found the event well-organized. Professor Welder commented that the worksheets given to the small-group participants allowed for extensive input to be captured, beyond that which was shared orally with the full group. Professor Bassuk and Professor Johnson commented upon the timeliness of the retreat topics (navigating disruption, freedom of inquiry, artificial intelligence). In reference to artificial intelligence, President Just noted that the Center for Teaching would be hosting an [AI Social](#) on Tuesday, September 9, 2:30-4:00 pm, in 2520D University Capitol Centre. He urged Councilors to attend and share what they learn with their collegiate colleagues. Such opportunities help us strengthen our internal communication skills, he commented, so that when crises occur, we already have informal structures in place to facilitate communication.

Past President Sheerin asked Councilors if they had considered any action items for the Senate officers based on their discussions at the retreat. President Just added that the materials on the freedom of inquiry portion of the retreat had been forwarded to the Iowa Board of Regents within a packet of information on this topic sent by the Office of the Provost to address recent [policy changes](#). He further commented that he is working with Professor Walker, chair of the Senate's Governmental Relations Committee, on developing strategies for communication to faculty regarding governmental activity. President Just reminded the group that the Senate is the primary deliberative body of the UI faculty and he indicated his intention to have the Senate not only engage in significant deliberation on pressing issues this year, but to communicate the substance of the Senate's deliberations to the faculty.

- *Executive Session: Councilor Discussion with Pete Matthes, Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations*

Professor Abou Alaiwa moved and Professor Walker seconded that the Faculty Council move into executive session, inviting Vice President Matthes to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Matthes shared challenges facing higher education broadly, highlighted UI's competitive strengths, summarized statewide outreach and reputation metrics, and outlined strategic initiatives, including [Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee](#) (SPARC) and retention programs, alongside anticipated challenges our university will face in 2026.

Professor Johnson moved and Professor Ayati seconded that the Faculty Council move out of executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

- *President's Report (Craig Just)*

President Just drew the group's attention to the [Faculty Judicial Commission](#)'s annual report, which was distributed to Councilors at the meeting. He indicated that the report was an informational document, but that if Councilors had significant questions about the report or the Commission's activities, the Presiding Officer, Professor Alison Guernsey, could be invited to a future Council meeting.

The call for nominations for the Senate's Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service will go out on September 4. Information on nomination procedures can be found on the Senate [website](#). The deadline for submitting a nomination is October 24. The selection committee for the Brody Award is comprised of the Senate president and four Councilors; this year, Professors Bassuk, Farag, Johnson, and Whitaker have agreed to serve on the committee. President Just emphasized that the Brody Award is one of the finest recognitions for faculty; it was created by faculty, for faculty, and is awarded in memory of Professor Michael J. Brody.

Enhanced connection with the UI Center for Advancement was one of President Just's goals for his presidency year. To gain an understanding of the scope of the Center for Advancement's work, faculty are invited to attend Advancement Partnership Workshops on Wednesday, September 17, 1:30-3:30 pm and Thursday, November 13, 9:00-11:00 am. Also, President Just offered Councilors the opportunity to represent shared governance in the Kinnick Press Box during football games. Faculty Senate is given two tickets to each home game. This is an opportunity to interact with Iowa elected officials and senior university administrators.

Lastly, President Just requested that Councilors reach out to the other members of their collegiate Senate delegations, to initiate a flow of communication regarding matters of importance to the delegation. Information harvested from this two-way communication and conveyed to the officers can be used to shape future Senate agendas.

IV. From the Floor – Professor Vogel mentioned that several faculty members from her college had approached her with concerns about the decision to close the Iowa City branch of the [State Historical Society of Iowa](#). Secretary Greysier commented that the Senate officers had been discussing this issue and would continue to do so.

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, September 16, 3:30 – 5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, October 7, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Abou Alaiwa moved and Professor Mohr seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Just adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.